Secret

Feb. 19, 1948.

Mr. Savage:

As I told you and Mr. Kennan, Mr. Humelsine handed this to me this morning. He told me that Mr. Lovett had said that we should keep the NSC paper for the present, that he did not want it circulated in the Department, and that the Palestine problem is being worked on by high Department officers.

At his staff meeting this morning, Mr. Lovett cautioned all not to express any views to anyone about Palestine. He said that the problem was not one for unilateral decision by State; and that he does not know what the Department's policy is.

GHB

George H. Butler

(76)

(R)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY VWOLF, JR. DATE 10/4/82

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TOP SECRET

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE UNDER SECRETARY

S/P

February 18, 1948

U - Mr. L..ett:

There is attached Copy No. 2 of the draft of a paper, dated February 17, 1948, entitled "The Position of the United States with Respect to Palestine", prepared by the staff of the National Security Council. This paper has been referred to the Departments of State, Army, Navy, and Air Force for comment on the consultant (Kennan-Sherman-Wedemeyer-Weyland) level.

The views of the Planning Staff already are a matter of record, and I transmit the NSC draft to you for whatever action you wish to take on it.

George F. Kennan

George F. Kennan

TOP SECRET

Copy no 2

TOP SECRET

February 17, 1948

DRAFT

THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES WITH RESPECT TO PALESTINE

THE PROBLEM

1. To assess and appraise the position of the United States with respect to Palestine, taking into consideration the security interests of the United States in the Mediterranean and Middle East Areas.

ANALYSIS

2. The National Security Council has agreed that "...The security of the Eastern Mediterranean and of the Middle East is vital to the security of the United States..."

3. The United States Government, on the basis of high motives and in consideration of conditions existing at the time, voted in favor of the General Assembly Resolution of 29 November 1947, recommending the Plan for Partition of Palestine. In so doing our government assumed a moral obligation, along with the other members of the UN who voted for the resolution, to lend its support honestly and courageously to the implementation of that resolution. Our government cannot without cause fail to fulfill this moral obligation. The most impelling cause for any change in our position on the Palestine problem would be a demonstration of the incompatibility of our present position with the security of our own nation.

4. The greatest threat to the security of the United States and to international peace is the USSR and its aggressive program of Communist expansion.

5. In meeting this threat, the United States cannot take steps which disregard the following considerations:

a. Unrestricted access to the oil resources of the Middle East is essential to the complete economy of the United States and to the economic recovery of Europe under the ERP.

b. In the event of war, the oil and certain strategic areas of the Middle East will figure prominently in the successful prosecution of such a war by the United States.

c. A friendly or at least a neutral attitude by the Arab peoples toward the US and its interests is requisite to the procurement of adequate quantities of oil for the purposes as stated and to the utilization of strategic areas without prohibitive cost in the event of war.

6. The United States cannot afford to allow the USSR to gain a lodgment in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have emphasized their view that, of all the possible eventualities in the Palestine situation, the most unfavorable in the security interests of the United States would be the intrusion of Soviet forces and, second only to that the introduction of US troops in opposition to possible Arab resistance.

7. It may be assumed that in supporting partition and in any subsequent action within the UN, the intent of the USSR is to exploit the situation in Palestine to its advantage. The USSR can most easily gain a lodgment in the Palestine area by introduction of Soviet or Soviet-controlled forces under the guise of some UN action, or by infiltration of a considerable number of Communist operatives. Such operatives are already at work within

the Jewish community and their influence will be enhanced so long as a condition of internal strife continues, and their numbers will be increased if the Jewish State is established. The prevailing bitterness and unrest of the Arab people will be nurtured by such operatives to the advantage of the USSR and to the disadvantage of the US.

8. The affirmative vote of the United States upon the UN Plan for Partition of Palestine, and the pressure applied to other governments by various US groups and individuals, have antagonized the Arab peoples to an unprecedented degree. Competent observers of Arab psychology predict that increasing animosity will attend each further manifestation of US leadership in or support of implementation of the Plan for Partition. Consideration must be given to the fact that the Arab people sincerely believe in the righteousness of their opposition to Palestine partition, which imposes upon them the major initial cost of attempting a solution to the international problem of Zionism. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have indicated that no action should be taken which would orient the people of the Middle East away from the Western Powers as the United States has a vital security interest in that area.

9. The United States holds that the peace and security of the world can be furthered by the proper functioning of the United Nations. The prestige of the UN is of deep concern to the United States and is a factor bearing upon US security. Successful and judicious handling of the Palestine issue will contribute materially to the ascendancy of the UN in world affairs. It is not clear that the prestige of the UN will be better served by intransigent insistence upon the implementation of the Plan for Partition

than by the adoption of a plan for the future government of Palestine which might be implemented without the use of armed force.

10. Fundamental to the Plan for Partition of Palestine is economic union between the proposed Jewish and Arab States. The Arabs have announced their implacable opposition to the establishment of the contemplated Arab State in Palestine, and there is no indication that the Jews and Arabs of Palestine have made any conciliatory moves to effect a compromise solution. Severe fighting has broken out between the Jews and Arabs of Palestine. These and other developments, since the General Assembly adoption of the Palestine resolution, raise grave doubts that the proposed solution to the Palestine problem is the one most conducive to the security of the US, the increased prestige of the UN, and to the peace of the world.

11. The other developments referred to above include the following:

a. The hope, which the US and other supporters of partition shared, that the UN recommendation would induce the cooperation of both Arab and Jew has not been realized.

b. The schedule for implementation of partition now appears impossible of attainment.

c. The premise that the Jewish State would be able to maintain internal order now appears increasingly doubtful.

d. The UN Commission on Palestine has reported that implementation of the partition resolution will require the assistance of non-Palestinian military [illegible]. The use of military forces to enforce partition is not [illegible] doubtful legality but might well

result in a threat to world peace and security not consonant with the basic purposes and principles of the United Nations.

12. The security of the United States, the peace of the world, and the preservation of the UN, dictate that all possible courses of action by this government be reexamined to determine the one with most promise of success to each of these objectives.

13. Alternative US courses of action with respect to the Palestine question are:

a. Fully support the partition plan with all the means at our disposal, including the use of armed forces under the United Nations.

Under this course of action, the United States would have to take steps to grant substantial economic assistance to the Jewish authorities and to afford them support through the supply of arms, ammunition and implements of war. In order to enable the Jewish state to survive in the face of wide-scale resistance from the Arabs in Palestine, from the neighboring Arab States, and possibly from other Moslem countries, the United States would be prepared ultimately to utilize its naval units and military forces for this purpose.

In the UN Security Council, the United States would seek to give effect to the UN recommendation that "any attempt to alter by force the settlement envisaged" by the resolution should be regarded as a threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression in accordance with Article 39 of the Charter. Thereafter the United States would assist in implementing the recommendation by contributing to an international force, either US armed forces or volunteers. Since it is clear that no other nation except Russia could be expected

to participate in such implementation to any appreciable extent, the United States would supply a substantial portion of the money, troops and arms for this purpose. If Russia participated, the United States at least would have to match the Russian effort in this respect.

(1) Advantages.

(a) Maintains UN and US policy constant in the eyes of the world.

(b) Contributes to the settlement of the displaced Jews of Europe.

(2) Disadvantages.

(a) Alienates the Moslem world with the resultant threat of:

1. Suspension or cancellation of US air base rights and commercial concessions including oil, and drastic curtailment of US trade in the area.

2. Loss of access to British air, military and naval facilities in the area, affecting our strategic position in the Middle East and Mediterranean.

3. Closing of our educational, religious and philanthropic institutions in the area.

4. Possible deaths, injuries and damages arising from acts of violence against individual US citizens and interests throughout the Middle East.

5. A serious impediment to the success of the European Recovery Program, which is dependent on increased production of Middle East oil.

(b) Provides a vehicle for Soviet expansion into an area vital to our security interests.

(c) Deploys US troops in a situation where there is high probability of loss of American lives and which might result in war.

(d) Fails to provide a final peaceful solution to the Palestine problem even if Arab and Jewish states are established.

(e) Increases the probability of anti-Semitic activities in the US.

(f) Requires the Security Council to act contrary to the Charter in imposing a settlement by force on the people of Palestine.

b. Continuation of support for the Partition Plan in the United Nations by all measures short of the use of outside armed forces to impose the Plan upon the people of Palestine.

In this course of action United States representatives in the UN Security Council, the Trusteeship Council and the Economic and Social Council would continue to support the implementation of the General Assembly recommendations on Palestine. Such support should take into account, however, that the Charter does not authorize the imposition of a recommended settlement upon the people directly concerned by armed action of the United Nations or its Members. In this course of action, United States representatives would continue to

support the General Assembly recommendations until such time as a new situation is created by:

(1) The inability to obtain a sufficient majority in one or more of the principal organs of the United Nations, or

(2) The development of a situation within Palestine which clearly substantiates the view of the UN Palestine Commission that outside force would be essential to carry the Partition Plan into effect.

The United States representative in the Security Council should not attempt to influence the vote of any other member of the Security Council. If no majority exists in the Security Council in support of partition, the Security Council might then recommend that a special session of the General Assembly be called to reconsider the Partition Plan. It would be essential for the United States to have in readiness for such a special session an alternative plan for Palestine which we would be willing to support.

(1) Advantages.

(a) Maintains the announced policy of the United States with respect to Palestine so long as such policy appears to have any reasonable opportunity for implementation.

(b) Retains the responsibility for consideration of the Palestine question within the framework of the United Nations, distributes the responsibility throughout the UN membership, and prevents it from becoming still further a matter of United States responsibility.

(c) Assures a certain amount of political support from elements in the major political parties within the United States.

(d) Contributes to the settlement of the displaced Jews of Europe.

(2) Disadvantages.

(a) Leads to continued deterioration of Arab relations with the United States with the attendent risks enumerated in paragraph ~~6 a(2)(a)~~. 13a (2)(a)

(b) Permits further exploitation of the interests of world Zionism by the USSR.

(c) Entails further loss of life while waiting for a conclusive demonstration that outside force will be required to preserve law and order within Palestine.

(d) Encourages the Arabs within Palestine to increase their resistance by all available means.

(e) In the event of implementation of partition, provides a vehicle for Soviet expansion into an area vital to our interests.

(f) Threatens the success of the European Recovery Program, which is dependent on increased production of Middle East oil.

c. Adopt a passive or neutral role, taking no further steps to aid or implement partition.

This course of action would involve maintenance and enforcement of the present United States embargo on arms to Palestine and the neighboring countries. The United States would give no unilateral assistance to either the proposed Jewish or Arab States financially, militarily or otherwise, and insofar as possible, the United States would require an attitude of neutrality to be observed by all persons or organizations under US jurisdiction. The United States would oppose sending armed forces into Palestine by the United Nations or any member thereof for the purpose of implementing partition, and would oppose the recruitment of volunteers for this purpose.

Such a course of action would rest on the assumption that implementation of the General Assembly resolution was a collective responsibility of the United

Nations and that no leadership in the matter devolved upon the United States. The United States would take the position that the UN machinery created by the partition plan should handle the question of implementation, and that the five-man Palestine Commission should proceed with the task entrusted to it of taking over control from the British. The United States would leave it to the peoples in Palestine to give effect to the General Assembly resolution.

(1) Advantages.

(a) Maintains United Nations and United States policy constant in the eyes of the world.

(b) Avoids employment of US troops in Palestine.

(2) Disadvantages

(a) S nders US initiative in the solution of the Palesti.. .lem.

(b) Permits communist encouragement of chaos.

(c) Possibly results in Russian intervention on a unilateral basis.

(d) Exposes the United States to possible curtailment of air base rights and commercial concessions including oil, and to a lesser degree to drastic curtailment of US trade in the area.

d. Alter our previous policy of support for partition and seek another solutionto the problem.

This course of action would call for a special session of the General Assembly to reconsider the situation. Abandoni..g US support of partition as impracticable and unworkable in view of the demonstrated inability of the people of Palestine to assume the responsibilities of self-government, and in view of the report of the Palestine Commission that outside military forces would be required, the United States would, under this course of action, attempt to seek a constructive solution of the problem.

As a first step in this direction the United States would seek to have the Security Council explore other avenues of a peaceful settlement when the Palestine case comes up for its consideration. Specifically the United States would endeavor to bring about conciliation of the problem. The United States would propose that

while working for such conciliation or arbitration, a special session of the General Assembly be called to consider a new solution in the form of

(1) An international trusteeship or

(2) A federal state,

with provision for Jewish immigration in either case, and preferably excluding the use of either US or USSR troops.

A trusteeship could take one of several forms; a three-power trusteeship of the US, UK and France, and joint US-UK trusteeship either with or without some of the smaller states, or a general UN trusteeship with the Trusteeship Council as administering authority. Alternatively, a federal state with cantonization, a plan which the British originally favored as having the greatest chance of success, could be discussed.

(1) Advantages.

(a) Assists in preventing Communist expansion into the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

(b) Improves our strategic position inthe Middle East, thereby enhancing our overall national security.

(c) Opens the way for restorationof US friendship and influence in the Arab world.

(d) Opens the way for a solution to the Palestine problem more acceptable to the people of Palestine.

(e) Lessens probability of use of US military forces in combat in Palestine.

(f) Protects our philanthropic and educational interests, investments and oil interests.

(2) Disadvantages.

(a) Produces violent Zionist opposition.

(b) Gives Russia and its Communist satellites a sounding board for further vitriolic vituperations.

(c) Requires the General Assembly to find another solution for the Palestion question without any present assurance of success.

CONCLUSIONS

14. Any solution of the Palestine problem which invites direct Soviet participation in administration, policing, or military operations in Palestine is a danger to the security of the United States.

15. Any solution of the Palestine problem which results in the continued hostility of the Arab world toward the United States will bring about conditions which endanger the security of the United States.

16. The US should continue support for the Partition Plan in the UN by all measures short of the use of outside armed force to impose the Plan upon the people of Palestine.

(The military members of the Staff do not concur in the above conclusion and offer the following as a substitute)

The United States should alter its previous policy of support for partition and seek another solution to the problem. In so doing, United States should propose that, in view of the changed conditions as set forth in the Analysis, the UN Security Council request that a special session of the General Assembly be convoked to reconsider the Palestine problem.

17. The United States should urge the Government of the United Kingdom to continue to exercise its mandate over Palestine in the event of reconsideration of the Palestine problem by the General Assembly. The United

States should also support a resolution by the UN Security Council requesting the UK to take this action.

18. In the event of reconsideration of the Palestine problem by the General Assembly, the United States should propose the creation of a trusteeship in Palestine with the UN Trusteeship Council as the administering authority. If necessary, this proposal should include provision for an international force to maintain internal order during a transitional period.

19. The United States should oppose dispatch of armed forces to Palestine for the purpose of enforcing the Partition Plan of November 29, 1947, against the objections of the inhabitants of Palestine.

20. The United States should immediately urge all Arab states to refrain from any act of aggression against Palestine.